4. ADDRESS READ BY MR. DANVERS ON BEHALF OF THE NORTH MYSORE PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION, 1ST OCTOBER 1906.

MR. MADHAVA RAO,

The North Mysore Planters' Association takes this opportunity of welcoming you back to Mysore; and congratulates both the State and yourself on your appointment as Dewan.

We have to thank Government for two fine bridges now nearing completion one over the Bhadra at Mahagoondi, and the other over the Hemavati at Anjur. They will be of great value to the District and leave little to be done in the way of large bridges. We would ask you now to consider a few small bridges which are needed, particularly one over the Sanveer Halla which unbridged stream disconnects the two bridges of Balehonnur and Mahagoondi.

Roads.—For several years past the roads in our District have been steadily growing worse, as they are unable to cope with the greatly increased traffic of the present day. Such main arteries as the Kadur-Kotigehar, and the Tarikere-Agumbi roads are too often in a sad condition impeding traffic and causing loss to cartmen through delay, broken axles, and the strained sinews of bullocks. Towards the end of the carting season the roads break up completely, and nothing short of doubling the allotments, for a time at least, seems likely to have any permanent effect. Three inches of metal applied once in eight years over ordinary earth is totally incapable of carrying the present day traffic; and we earnestly hope that Government will give this matter the attention needed. Without desiring to usurp the functions of the Public Works Department, we suggest that for at least four years in the Maidan Taluks, *four* inches of metal over *two* furlongs per year be allowed on main roads; while in the Malnad and on all Ghauts, *six* inches of metal over two furlongs per annum should be applied. This would give a *foundation* for the road surface which does not exist at present. We would also urge the extended use of steam rollers for the usual methods of consolidation are primitive and inefficient; and the roads are practically consolidated by the wheels of the carts, which however not only press the metal downwards, but sideways and upwards causing two channels at once in which water runs, and disintegration of the surface commences. The Tonga service established by the Post Office from Kadur to Mangalore was discontinued owing to the accidents which occurred on the Ghauts through the bad surface and the want of parapets and we are apprehensive that the motor car service now proposed may fall through from the same causes.

Justice of the Peace.—The late Dewan, Sir P. N. Krishna Murti was approached on the subject of appointing Justices of the Peace in the Planting Districts, and promised his attention; but his retirement left the matter undisposed of. We ask you, Sir, to give this matter your favorable attention, as it is a long way to Bangalore, and Documents from England requiring signature before a Justice of the Peace are on the increase.

Liquor Shops.—We ask Government to consider whether the number of these shops cannot be reduced. Every two miles or so along many of our roads the passer-by is tempted to drink, and every estate cooly has the choise of two or three shops. He usually chooses all three, and runs up accounts which he subsequently liquidates with stolen coffee; but worse than this, both drunkenness and gambling are greatly on the increase. The confirmed gambler, dismissed from an estate finds a warm welcome at the liquor shop. When he attracts as customers the other coolies he has taught to gamble. This increasing drunkenness and gambling will soon swell Police Reports; and both are fostered by the excessive number of the liquor shops. We are aware that these conditions obtain also in British Territory, but we would be pleased to see Mysore lead the way to a very desirable reform.

Police.—We congratulate Government on the increased smartness and efficiency of the Police Force which have been apparent lately; and which we trust will continue long enough to become a tradition in the Department.

Lands for Rubber Planting.—We desire to thank you, Sir, for the sympathatic manner in which you met our views at the conference on this subject and for the terms then granted, on which land may be obtained or perhaps I should now say, may be *applied for*. Every planter left the meeting satisfied with the attitude you adopted, and the terms you conceded, but that satisfaction, I regret to say, has already been considerably modified by subsequent events. Some applications have been lately refused for reasons that fill the minds of those who have not yet received replies with considerable apprehension, and while the *terms* remain good, *land* seems likley to be unobtainable. A few evergreen *trees* in a large block of deciduous forest suffice to class that block as evergreen *jungle*; and the land is refused. A stream that trickles through the hot weather is called perennial and considered sufficient justification for the refusal of the application. Other lands are refused because the Forest Department either has made, or is *thinking* of making them, into State Forests. We submit that there are few jungles but contain a few evergreen trees, and that perennial streams are necessary, not only for the raising of plants in nurseries and for the curing of products, but for the daily use of the Planter and his labourers.

Two main impediments seem to stand in the way of our obtaining suitable land either for Coffee or Rubber. One is the theory of diminished rainfall and water-supply, and the other the huge reserves made by the Forest Department.

As regards the first, some mischief has been done of late years by certain persons writing to the papers and asserting that coffee cultivation and Forest Department thinnings have injuriously affected the rainfall. These vapourings appear to have had a great effect on the Government of the past, and

we are how suffering from the fright caused by the bogy of diminished rainfall. Before giving some figures *disproving* the theory of a diminished rainfall, I would like, Sir, in the name of every Planter in Mysore but one, to emphatically *deny* the assertion, and to assert in our turn that the partial clearing of forests, with the resulting *cultivation of the soil*, actually *increases* the flow of the streams; for instead of half the rainfall rushing into the nearest nala over a hard and root-bound surface, it is absorved by the cultivated land, and results in an increased flow from the streams. I have often seen what was only a wallowing pool for bison and sambur turn into a decent stream after the jungle has been opened.

Coffee cultivation to the man in the street conveys the idea of cleared forests and open culture, such as is seen on the road to Coonur or Ootacamund, but that same man in the street would be puzzled to locate a coffee plantation in Mysore, unless the road went by the side of or through it, and so enabled him to see under the shade trees. On *any* class of land we maintain that our method of cultivation does not effect the water-supply unfavourably; and on the greater portion of the land still available, that is to say in the deciduous jungle, it has a *decidedly beneficial* effect. No one, at any rate, who has suffered from the rush of water off the hardened and root bound surface of the uncleared land above his estate, doubts this—and we invite *you*, Sir, to pay us a visit at an early date; your welcome will be cordial, and your memory will be refreshed.

I now give some figures as to rainfall, which speak for themselves They are taken from the Balur Estate, in which the Hemavati has its rise, and cover a period of thirty years. I have divided the figures into periods of five years, and give the yearly average rainfall for each cold quinquennium.

From	1875	to	1879,	the average yearly fall was	95	inches.
„	1880	„	1884	„	112	„
„	1885	„	1889	„	119	„
„	1890	„	1894	„	118	„
„	1895	„	1899	„	136	„
„	1900	„	1904	„	138	„

The rainfall of the past two years has been defective, and badly distributed; but such short falls were not unknown before coffee was cultivated.

The other and very large impediment in our path is the Octopur-like grip of the Forest Department, which is rapidly seizing all lands suitable for cultivation, and which bars the way on every side. Which admitting that the preservation of forest is necessary, we submit that the preservation of every acre of it is not so; and in time of the increase of population, it seems necessary that Government should throw open to cultivation by man the rich land provided by nature for man

There is plenty of land unsuited for these cultivations which will do all that is necessary for rain fall, or on which trees can be grown by the Department and to reserve large blocks of the richest soil in the State seems false economy.

We submit that much more benefit to the State would accrue should the Forest Department devote its energies and we recognize and admit the *energy* with which the Department is conducted to the planting of suitable trees in the Maidan Taluks, which contain almost unlimited areas of desolation. There is room, even in this favoured State, for the energies of two departments on such work. A few thousand acres of such afforestment (while the heavy jungles on the Ghauts are thinned) would improve the *distribution* of the rainfall over the Province, and would form in themselves a monument to any Dewan who inaugurated such a scheme, and to any Conservator of Forests who carried it out, that each might be proud of.

I lately read an order of Government on Reservations which gives me hope that the Campaign, which this address inaugurates, may be speedily ended. Col. Grant, in submitting his report on the work of the re-survey, very pertinently remarked "There was quite a strong desire manifested to take up fresh land, but the requirements of the Excise and Forest Departments chiefly stood in the way. Population is increasing, and the real necessity for the large reservations made by these Departments require most careful scrutiny." And the Government order thereon says "Government will always be prepared to consider proposals for expunging from Reserve Lists, land which may have been withheld for Excise purposes to the prejudice of real agricultural interests, and lands which may have been constituted into Forest Reserve without sufficient justification. Col. Grant's remarks are commended to the attention of the Revenue Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners of Districts, and also of the Excise Commissioner and the Conservator of Forests."

This order is satisfactory so far as it goes, and we hope it may be applied to our case, and the attention of Deputy Commissioners, the Conservator of Forests, *and* the staff that provides those officers with information, be more directly drawn to it—when the liberal spirit of the rubber terms may be transmitted into the consideration of applications for land.

We would also respectfully urge, Sir, that more consideration be shown to applicants as regards the *time* that it takes to obtain land. The ordinary delays are regrettable and vexatious—often inexplicable; some lands applied for two years ago are not granted yet—neither "yes" nor "no" can be obtained; but in this matter of rubber especially it is necessary to be early in the field if we are to reap the full benefit of the present boon in that product.

I must apologize, Sir, for the time that I have taken up; but the matter is a serious and pressing one to us.

I thank you for the patient hearing you have given me.

C. DANVERS,
President, N. M. P. A.